



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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Field Office

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Dear Retailer:

As you may already know, the State of California is implementing a statewide Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system for all recipients of food stamps and some recipients of cash program benefits, such as CalWORKS and General Assistance. Under this new program, food stamp coupons will become obsolete as they are replaced by EBT systems. In the new EBT system, food stamp households will access their food stamps using the new Golden State Advantage Card (like a bank/ATM card) and a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to purchase eligible food items at stores authorized to accept food stamps by the USDA. Authorized retailers will accept payment for food stamp purchases using Point-of Sale (POS) equipment installed at the cash register. This new program will begin in your county soon. Click on the following link, [http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/County\\_implement\\_sched.htm](http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/County_implement_sched.htm), for the County Implementation Schedule.

Citicorp Electronic Financial Services, Inc. (Citicorp EFS) has been contracted by the State of California to provide EBT services. Many of you have already been contacted by Citicorp EFS and have already participated in meetings regarding this new program. Citicorp EFS is available to provide detailed explanations of the various options regarding your participation in EBT. Citicorp EFS Retail Operations may be reached by calling 1-800-350-8533.

As EBT comes into your area, sales representatives from other companies providing commercial POS equipment and services may also contact you. Commercial POS equipment processes credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, etc.) and debit (bank/ATM) card transactions and will also work for EBT. EBT may also use the existing commercial POS equipment many of you already have. Commercial POS equipment may be the best solution for your business and we encourage you to review commercial options when making this business decision. However, we urge you to use caution, as sales representatives from some of these companies may lead you to believe that only their company's equipment will work for EBT or that you must sign a contract immediately. Please be aware that there is no single commercial company or EBT solution. Before signing a contract with any commercial company, it is important to determine whether the company is "certified". This can be determined by contacting Citicorp EFS, at the number provided above.

Please be advised that commercial equipment is NOT a requirement for continued participation in the Food Stamp Program. You will be offered "EBT only" equipment when EBT comes to your area. This equipment will work only for EBT customers and is available to eligible food stamp authorized retailers at no cost.

Any questions regarding EBT and POS equipment or to find out if a company is certified, should be directed to Citicorp EFS at 1-800 350-8533. Any questions regarding the Food Stamp Program or becoming authorized to accept food stamps should be directed to this office at (916) 498-5790. Helpful information may also be found at our website at [www.fns.usda.gov/fsp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp).

Sincerely,

Teresa L. Toups  
Officer-In-Charge  
Sacramento Field Office